



CULVER CITY SDAT

Achieving Sustainability
in a Sprawling Metropolis

A Sustainable Design
Assessment Team Report

Culver City, California
May 7–9, 2007



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Culver City, Calif., with its population of slightly more than 40,000, is a city within a city. Located in the heart of Los Angeles County, Culver City has long established itself as a vital center: a safe, modern, and progressive community that combines a rich entertainment history and a rapidly expanding multimedia industry with the benefits of small-town life in the nation's second largest metropolitan area. Although many towns are now consumed by their regions and have lost much of their traditional identity and autonomy, Culver City continues to be rooted in its diverse citizenry and its sense of character and place. Yet even as it enjoys a unique quality of life, it does so in the context of Los Angeles and the region's broader changes: overwhelming population growth, traffic congestion, poor public transportation and air quality, limited water resources, and an affordable housing shortage. Recognizing the ongoing and potential impact of these changes, Culver City is actively planning for a different future—one that includes sustainability to ensure its continued economic, social, and environmental viability.

Starting with the traditional grid-iron town and a population of 550 in 1917, Culver City originally occupied 1.2 square miles. Situated along a major transportation route, next to railroad tracks and halfway between the growing Pueblo of Los Angeles and the beach resorts of Venice, it formed a compact center predicated on ideals of creating a balanced city that meshed commercial and residential uses. Today Culver City is contained within five square miles and continues to be close to everything else: just east of Santa Monica, Calif., and Venice, Calif.; just south of Beverly Hills, Calif.; and just north of the Los Angeles International Airport. Given these locational attributes, a daytime population in excess of 200,000 people traverses the city's urban fabric on a daily basis, and yet Culver City has managed to successfully retain much of its historic character in its downtown, its unique residential neighborhoods, and its walkable, pedestrian scale.

Once primarily a home to movie studios, it has been recently inundated with escapees from Los Angeles looking for affordable housing and a comprehensible community. Over the past 20 years Culver City has worked hard to reestablish itself as “the heart of Screenland,” and a once-neglected downtown is again thriving with major motion picture studios; dozens of architecture and design firms; several museums, theaters, and cultural centers; and numerous vibrant and lively design showrooms, artists' galleries, eclectic restaurants, and cafes. This blend of one part Hollywood nostalgia and one part modern design has rendered Culver

City a desirable place to live and work and presents opportunities to leverage its recent reputation as a center for diversity and savvy innovation.

Achieving Sustainability in a Sprawling Metropolis points the way to a future for Culver City that is pragmatic and visionary. In the face of prosperity and its accompanying challenges, Culver City is at a crossroads in terms of planning. With all of the above as a backdrop, Culver City is currently undertaking a process to develop and implement a sustainable community plan as part of its General Plan Update (GPU) which can serve to build on the existing strengths of the community while charting efforts to protect and preserve local assets and resources. At the same time this process challenges the community to expand the influence of planning to include bold changes in policy, infrastructure, capital improvements, building and development codes, and economic strategies, all aimed at making Culver City more livable and sustainable.

The Sustainable Design Assessment Team (SDAT) report is a starting point to focus the city's GPU on principles of sustainability in conjunction with recent initiatives by the city's leadership. Along with 500 communities nationwide, Culver City has signed on to the U.S. Conference of Mayors' Climate Protection Agreement and pledges to strive for a 7 percent reduction below 1990 levels of greenhouse gas emissions by 2012 by reducing sprawl, promoting alternatives to private automobile use, increasing energy efficiency and recycling rates, and planting trees. On top of that, the city has joined, along with nearly 250 local governments in the United States and another 400 around the world, the Cities for Climate Protection Campaign, run by the nonprofit International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives. Under this initiative the city agrees to formalize a five-step process: a baseline emissions inventory and forecast followed by adoption of an emissions reduction target, development of a local action plan, implementation of specific policies and measures and monitoring results. Several recent city efforts, particularly the solid waste recycling and management programs, are addressing environmental concerns with great results and are also steps in the right direction.



As Culver City's government, business, civic, and neighborhood groups deliberate over increasingly complex issues, a clearly articulated vision is demanded that prioritizes goals, identifies resources, and affirms commitments toward strategies for a more sustainable future. Although this report addresses many of the issues and proposes efficacious initiatives, it also touches upon fundamental ways for Culver City's broad community to evaluate more creative approaches to resolve seemingly intractable problems.

Issues to Be Addressed

Making Culver City sustainable is a mandate, expressed by its residents, in a community visioning process started in 1999 and completed in 2003. A major impetus for Culver City's renewed interest in sustainability is the city's currently mandated GPU. With the plan's elements dating back 10–30 years and out of tune with current development trends and patterns, the timing is right to incorporate the concept of sustainability into the city's major planning documents and day-to-day operations.



This SDAT report highlights six significant elements that hold the potential to affect a sustainable city future. These elements were initially identified by city staff, which has recently begun the process of developing a sustainable community plan to guide the GPU. The sustainable community plan states as its purpose the following:

...to guide policy decisions while considering the long-term impacts to the natural environment and economic health of Culver City residents/community.

The sustainable community plan's six goal areas are

- Community education and participation
- Waste management and recycling
- Environmental pollution and public health protection
- Resource conservation
- Sustainable transportation
- Sustainable land use and open space

This SDAT report looks at these six goal areas and presents for each

- An assessment of current conditions
- An emerging vision for a sustainable future
- Recommended strategies to get from the current condition to the future vision

Assessment of Current Conditions of Sustainability

Overall the SDAT observed that Culver City has many positive assets on which to build. There are certainly challenges and weaknesses to overcome but it appears the goodwill and enthusiasm exist with which to pursue a proactive approach to shaping the city's future.

As part of the SDAT roundtable discussions, which included numerous community stakeholders, specific recommendations follow in each section of the report based on strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats faced by the city today and a vision for the future began to emerge in each of the six topic areas listed above.

Community Participation and Education

Culver City residents and its municipal government have an increased awareness of and concern about environmental issues. A strong commitment to sustainability is evidenced in the many local planning initiatives already in place today, and much of the needed information for an updated general plan is close to being completed. Yet there is no unified vision for a sustainable future and for Culver City among its citizenry, which creates mixed expectations and uncertainty among residents as to what the city should be.

A Culver City vision can be organized in different ways but should be built on Culver City's sense of place and sustainability values. For all aspects of the city to be sustainable, the city will need to continue to emphasize its role as leader in the creation and sponsorship of educational opportunities focused on sustainability issues. Community awareness, responsibility, participation, and education are key elements of a sustainable community. To this end building consensus citywide and informed decision-making are clearly the most critical tasks ahead.

Waste Management and Recycling

Culver City currently has a waste management and recycling strategy that allows for a synergistic relationship between the community and the city's Public Works department. When it comes to sustainable waste management and recycling, Culver City has initiated an effective leadership role by "talking the talk" and "walking the walk." Increasing rates of recycling, improving stormwater quality, and using clean fuels for city vehicles, as well as the creation of the Environmental Programs and Operations Division under Public Works, are great first steps.

More can be done, however, to fully integrate sustainability policies and programs. Through continued municipal leadership and excellence; by increased community education and awareness; by the expansion of existing systems and operations; and by developing, adopting, and implementing the highest maximum efficiency in the management of materials, Culver City can achieve its visionary endpoint: zero waste by 2020.

Environmental Pollution and Public Health Protection

Regional and citywide environmental and public health concerns will require that Culver City plan and regulate with forethought. To achieve sustainability in the areas of water quality, water supply, and pollution control, city decision-making will need to be guided by policies and programs that maximize environmental benefits and reduce or eliminate negative environmental impacts. Although some programs are already in place, a more concerted effort will have greater positive implications.

A city environmental policy and action plan are needed to ensure that environmental considerations are integrated into all Culver City decisions respecting planning, growth, service delivery, finance, and operations. Under this plan strategies to maximize water conservation and minimize water usage, proper hazardous waste collection and disposal, and targeted goals for reduction in urban runoff and wastewater generation will need to be formalized to include monitoring, oversight, and continued research, as well as education and community awareness. Continued work with the West Basin Water District to develop a joint plan of action and on the city's ongoing Reclaimed Water Program are steps in the right direction.

Resource Conservation

The community is concerned about its energy future and has a growing commitment to exploring opportunities for energy conservation and increased energy efficiency as well as reduction in automobile fuel consumption. A sustainable energy strategy will require that the city, residents, and businesses continue to prioritize resource use reduction, with the city as a leader in modeling sustainable practices in its municipal operations. Improvements over time should reflect the community's collective efforts toward green design and technologies, energy audits, energy performance contracting, procurement of renewable resources, and construction practices resulting in reduction of energy costs and promotion of renewable energy sources. In the end the full implementation of a vision is, in fact, to be dramatically less dependent on nonrenewable fuel sources and to notably reduce greenhouse gas emissions at the same time.

Sustainable Transportation

Transportation is a central component of a sustainable community, not simply as a network of movement among destinations but also as a functional complement to land use. Traffic, congestion, and the conversion of great numbers of people to more sustainable modes of transit remain significant challenges in many communities like Culver City. Solutions involving proactive transit strategies combined with voluntary practices have proven to have a longstanding impact on the quality of air, health, and environment as well as the livability of our communities.

To provide a sustainable transportation system, Culver City will need to join its neighbors in being a leading advocate for regional transportation planning and for the Metro Expo Line which is now under construction. A broad range of innovative programs, ranging from local voluntary approaches (e.g., smart parking meters, car sharing, clean school and transit buses, and hybrid cars and trucks) to expansion of the city's public transit systems (e.g., City BUS), and choices can improve local quality of life, promote wiser and more sustainable development patterns, and result in substantial emissions reductions. These initiatives, however, will remain the exception without more investment and partnership-driven initiatives, better regulatory incentives, good design, and significant attention to how the impacts of these approaches can be measured and integrated into the city's long-term planning processes.

Sustainable Land Use and Open Space

An overall vision for Culver City must consider a truly integrated place where all aspects of the city are sustainable. In the full realization of this vision, choices will no longer be about either/or (choosing either development or nongrowth) but about how to integrate sustainability into everything that occurs in the city (e.g., creating sustainable development that is also integrated with transportation, employment, and housing options). In this way, all aspects of the city work together for the greater good of its residents and visitors for many generations to come.

In the face of rising land values and construction costs, Culver City will need to define a sustainable land use and growth management strategy through regulatory changes and provisions that promote the principles of smart growth and sustainability. Various tools are available to the city to enable sustainability planning. California, for example, requires cities to update housing elements of their general plans more frequently than other elements, offering the city the opportunity to develop a planning vision for a particular issue (e.g., housing affordability) and explore sustainability planning directions

in depth. In Culver City, the mixed-use ordinance is seen as an important tool to enable the city to meet its Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) requirements mandated by the state over the next seven years and to do so to bring about major changes in housing affordability and its impact on the community.

This strategy is one of many that will protect the integrity of the entire community, economy, and environment. Most important, it will also serve to guide development throughout the city to ensure the efficient and socially responsible use of land resources, making the city one of the best places in the country to live and work.

Recommended Strategies for Sustainability

Recommended strategies were developed that addressed each of the six individual goal areas. Four general recommendation statements, however, apply to all areas of focus:

- Embrace sustainability as your core value; set your goals and use your core values as an ongoing measure of success.
- Promote a diversity of choices within all issues. It is recognized that there is no one single solution to achieve sustainability; rather, diversity is required to assure the greatest chances of success as well as needed interactions.
- Consider the context of Culver City as part of a larger city and region. This report focuses on the issues within the boundaries of the city but clearly Culver City influences and is influenced by the rest of the greater Los Angeles metropolis and Southern California region.
- Partner with other public and private organizations in Los Angeles and the region for land use and transportation strategies, alternative energy options, and resource conservation initiatives, as well as innovations in green design, construction, and technologies.

INTRODUCTION

In November 2006 Culver City submitted a proposal to the American Institute of Architects (AIA) for a Sustainable Design Assessment Team (SDAT) to assist the town and its citizens in addressing key issues facing the community. The issues ranged from incorporating sustainability principles into the upcoming general plan update to encouraging community participation and education.

The AIA accepted the proposal and, after a preliminary visit by a small group in February, the SDAT members arrived in Culver City on May 7, 2007. For three days, the team members, working closely with local officials, community leaders, technical experts, and citizens, studied the community and its concerns. During those three days, the team came to understand the issues and used its expertise to frame a wide range of recommendations, which were presented to the community in a public meeting on May 9.

This report is a more detailed version of the findings and recommendations that were presented to the community on May 9. After a brief overview of the SDAT program and process, and a short discussion of Culver City and the issues it faces, the report covers

- Community education and participation
- Waste management and recycling
- Environmental pollution and public health protection
- Resource conservation
- Sustainable transportation
- Sustainable land use and open space

A closing section offers some thoughts on how the community can best address the range of issues and recommendations covered in the report.

What Is the SDAT Program?

The SDAT program is an interdisciplinary community assistance program that focuses on principles of sustainability. Launched in 2005, the program is an additional chapter in the AIA's history of supporting communities with volunteer design expertise.

The SDAT program is modeled on the AIA's Regional and Urban Design Assistance Team (R/UDAT) program. While the R/UDAT program provides communities with specific design solutions, the SDAT program provides broad assessments to help frame

future policies or design solutions in the context of sustainability and helps communities plan the first steps of implementation. The SDAT program is based on an understanding of design as a process that

- Is integrative, holistic, and visual
- Is central to achieving a sustainable relationship between humans, the natural environment, and the place
- Gives three-dimensional form to a culture and a place
- Achieves balance among culture, environment, and economic systems

The SDAT program is grounded in the AIA design assistance team values, which call for a multidisciplinary approach, objectivity of the participating team members, and broad public participation.

Why Is the SDAT Program Valuable?

Many communities are immobilized by conflicting agendas, politics, personalities, or even an overabundance of opportunity. Many communities have not yet taken stock of their current practices and policies within a sustainability framework, while others have identified issues of concern but desire assistance in developing a plan of action to increase sustainability. The SDAT process ensures that alternative solutions are given a fair hearing and that options are weighed impartially. The SDAT process

- Informs the community of opportunities and encourages them to take action to protect local and regional resources
- Helps the community understand the structure of the place at various scales and contexts—from regional resources to the neighborhood scale
- Explores and articulates the larger contexts and interactions of ecological, sociological, economic, and physical systems
- Visualizes potential futures
- Recognizes and describes the qualities of a place by preserving the best elements of the past, addressing the needs of the present, and planning for the needs of future generations
- Identifies and describes choices and consequences
- Connects plans and actions

- Advances the principles of quality sustainable communities
- Helps the community define the roles of various stakeholders
- Develops a roadmap for the implementation of more sustainable policies and practices



The key to SDAT success is diversity and participation; the process involves multiple disciplines and multiple stakeholders. The SDAT process includes not only the expert team but also government agencies and officials, private businesses, schools and students, community members, and other parties as appropriate.

Who Are the Key Participants in the SDAT Process?



SDATs bring a team of respected professionals, selected on the basis of their experience with the specific issues facing the community, to work with community decision-makers to help them develop a vision and framework for a sustainable future. Team members volunteer their time to be a member of the SDAT. To ensure their objectivity, they agree to refrain from taking paid work for three years from the date of completion of the SDAT project. A distinct team is assembled for each project based on the project's unique features. The team consists of a leader, five to seven members, and a staff person from the AIA Center for Communities by Design.

The professional stature of the SDAT members, their independence, and the pro bono nature of their work generate community respect and enthusiasm for the SDAT process, which in turn encourages the participation of community stakeholders. The passion and creativity that are unleashed by a top-notch multidisciplinary team of professionals working collaboratively can produce extraordinary results.



Local Steering Committee

The steering committee is the key organizing group for an SDAT project. It is responsible for assembling local and regional information, organizing the preliminary meeting and SDAT visit, and generating local media coverage during the entire project. After the SDAT visit, the steering committee typically evolves into a group that is dedicated to implementing the SDAT recommendations.

Local Technical Committee

The local technical committee is the technical support group for the SDAT project, including local design professionals, environmental professionals, economists, and others whose skills and experience parallel those of the SDAT members and who bring with them detailed knowledge of local conditions, issues, and information resources. Their presence magnifies the effectiveness of the team.

Citizens

In the end, the citizens of the community are the critical players, both for their insights and observations during the team visit and for their support for the new directions that emerge from the SDAT process.

On behalf of the Culver City SDAT and the AIA, it is hoped this report will be a useful guide to the Culver City community as it charts its future for the coming years and for coming generations.



CULVER CITY TODAY

History

Culver City was originally settled by the Gabrielino Indians, who lived in villages throughout Southern California. The Gabrielinos settled along Culver City's main waterway, La Ballona Creek, which offered water, safety, and an abundance of food. The Spaniards arrived in the 1500s and in 1791 settled El Pueblo de Nuestra Señora la Reina de Los Angeles, which would later become the area known as downtown Los Angeles. Several prominent families were provided with land grants outside El Pueblo. Culver City was formed from portions of the 14,000-acre Rancho La Ballona (Machado/Talamantes property) and Rincón de Los Bueyes (Higuera/Lopez property).

Harry H. Culver, from Milford, Nebr., dreamed of a balanced city. He started plans for the city that carries his name in 1913, and it became an incorporated entity in 1917. He established the city in a temperate zone, along a transportation route, alongside railroad tracks, halfway between the growing city Los Angeles and Abbot Kinney's resort, Venice. Culver City became an incorporated municipality in 1917, at which time it occupied 1.2 square miles. In 1917 Culver managed to convince Thomas Ince, a famous filmmaker, to locate his studios here. First known as Inceville Studios, the lots then became Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM). In addition, Thomas Ince located a second studio near a bustling downtown Culver City, giving rise to Culver City's motto, "The Heart of Screenland." The Hal Roach Studio also was located in Culver City and was home to the Our Gang and Laurel and Hardy comedies.

Culver City began to develop itself, as a 1.2 square mile area, centered about its small Main Street. In the early days of the city, the trustees concentrated on the actions necessary to form the city. City tracts and streets were named and paved, a numbering system was adopted, and employees were hired to take care of the city's business. The fire and police departments were established. The economic balance had begun, with the studios forming the early economic base. Industry came in the form of Western Stove in 1922 and the Helms Bakeries in 1930, and then the Hayden Industrial Tract was established in the 1940s. Prohibition spawned a plethora of night spots and bootlegging in the 1920s and 1930s, with World War II stalling growth in the 1940s. Car dealerships replaced the night spots on Washington Boulevard in the 1950s.

Over the years, more than 40 annexations increased the city's size to about five square miles. Culver City transitioned from a general-law city to a charter city in 1947. In addition to city government, schools became a part of the community, and by 1949 Culver City had its own

Unified School District, meaning that education was available through secondary school. The five-member Board of Education governs Culver City's public schools, just as the five-member elected City Council governs the city. Other elected city officials include the city clerk and treasurer.

Much of the film industry investment leveled off in the 1960s and 1970s and parts of the studios were sold for condominiums and commercial development. By 1971 the city council became aware of the need for redevelopment and formed the Culver City Redevelopment Agency. The first major project accomplished under the agency was the Fox Hills Mall, which opened in 1975. In 1990 the former MGM lot was purchased by Sony and became the headquarters for Columbia Pictures, Tri-Star Pictures, and Sony Pictures Entertainment. In the years since, Culver City has worked hard to reestablish itself as the Heart of Screenland and a once-neglected downtown is again bustling with ongoing redevelopment plans. By the year 2000, the city had quadrupled in size and become a community of nearly 40,000 residents. Today the city faces the same challenges that are common to all urban areas: balancing quality of life with economic pressures of a growing regional population.

Demographics

Culver City's population has increased from 550 at the time of its incorporation in 1917 to 40,934 inhabitants in 2005. Culver City's daytime population exceeds 200,000. With a median age of 38, a median household income of \$60,000 (versus \$41,500 for Los Angeles County), and 31 percent of residents with a college education, Culver City residents have been described as "urban achievers, a bohemian mix, money and brains." In recent years and following extensive redevelopment efforts, the city's central location, quiet small-town feeling, and low-key charm have become a magnet for lovers of the arts, good food, and culture, thereby attracting people who often begin as pass-through visitors or part-time residents and later make Culver City their home.

Trends

Current growth trends in Los Angeles have been the highest in California, with pressures to accommodate additional growth steadily increasing over the years. This growth trend is also evident in Culver City. Centrally located between the beach and downtown Los Angeles, the city has proved very attractive to working professionals, young families, aging retirees, and start-up businesses looking for a safe, modern, and progressive community that combines a unique shopping environment, good education, and a rich entertainment history, with a rapidly expanding multimedia hub.

Although the city’s median household income of \$60,000 is comparable to Santa Monica and well above the county as a whole, income growth over the past decade was less than one-third that experienced in other Westside cities. And although population levels are projected to remain relatively constant over the next several decades, the city’s employment base is projected to grow dramatically, generating further housing demand from the local workforce. (The U.S. Census has documented rents in Culver City as the highest among Westside jurisdictions, with the exception of Beverly Hills. The median advertised apartment rent is currently \$1,600–\$2,500, with extremely limited rental vacancies contributing to rent escalation. In addition market rents are beyond the level of affordability of all lower income [up to 80 percent of county median income] households). Culver City’s Housing Division has worked to meet Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) goals through numerous ongoing and proposed programs, projects, and policies. The GPU’s housing element will address these issues in more detail, as they place Culver City in a particularly precarious situation for the future.

Why Help Is Needed

Big-picture plans often gather dust on shelves and are rarely referenced in planning debates, having little to no effect on actual urban development. As part of Culver City’s sustainable community plan and the GPU, the city has taken bold steps toward addressing current pressures and trends and, most important, looking at them in an interconnected way. As a means to an end, the GPU process is already starting to serve a powerful role by developing consensus around sustainable development directions, setting forth specific policies, and holding the city responsible for achieving agreed-upon goals.

It is the hope of the SDAT that this process will contribute sustainable solutions that can be endorsed by all community stakeholders while simultaneously encouraging and promoting support for sustainability at the city and regional levels. In the end, the plan’s usefulness will depend on strong physical planning and urban design decisions to help portray collective hopes for the future of the city; allow necessary political conflict to emerge; build social, intellectual, and political capital within the community; and set agendas for powerful public agencies.

COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION

Culver City is already committed to community education and public participation. One of the strongest themes we heard from community members, in public forums and on-the-street interviews, is that city government is remarkably accessible, adding to the small town feel of Culver City. We found that

- City government is accessible at all levels, from line staff and department heads to city councilors and commissioners.
- Culver City exceeds California requirements for community outreach related to planning and permit processes.
- Culver City is getting the word out about its sustainability efforts, especially related to clean air, water quality, and recycling. Its various logos are phenomenal. By all accounts, its sustainable design workshops were well received.
- The city's Web site is informative and useful and provides a 24/7 window into Culver City.

There are, however, clear opportunities for improvement in five broad areas:

- Sustainability vision
- Community education and outreach
- Public participation
- Community leadership
- Public participation benchmarking and metrics

Sustainability Vision (“The Vision Thing”)

Every Culver City school child knows that Harry Culver's vision was to create a “balanced residential/commercial community” and “the Heart of Screenland.” These visions helped create Culver City as it is today. There is no equivalent community-or government-accepted vision of Culver City as a sustainable community. It is easier to find Harry Culver's 1913 vision for Culver City, a vision that reflected community consensus at the time, than it is to find a current shared community vision for sustainability.

The Culver City Charter has a mission statement for city government:

*...responsive, efficient, effective, and accountable government...
all voices in our diverse community can be heard...ensure fair
representation and distribution of government resources...provide
a safe and harmonious environment for our mutual well-being...
promote the principles of liberty, equality, and home rule.*

Culver City employees have their own mission statement:

*...effectively providing the highest levels of service...enrich the
quality of life for the community...by building on our tradition of
...public service, by our present commitment, and by our dedica-
tion to meet the challenges of the future.*

Culver City also has vision statements and mission statements as part of the Direction 21 strategic planning process, the general plan, the vision and strategic planning process, and departments' mission statements. All of these help guide decision making in Culver City but none serve as a vision as to what Culver City is all about or what it wants to be. None of these visions serves as a call to integrate sustainability into every action or a call to action of any kind.

Harry Culver's vision was clear and concise and did not have to compete with multiple community vision statements. Culver City needs to involve the community in building a clear and concise community consensus for sustainability. Increasing rates of recycling, improving stormwater quality, and using clean fuels for city vehicles, all of which Culver City is doing, are great environmental steps. These steps are not, however, sufficient to create a sustainable community. Culver City is exploring a paradigm shift, a different way of doing business and organizing the community for long-term sustainability. No such shift can be successful without the community participating in a visioning process and creating a strong clear vision for Culver City.

We heard community residents express a frustration about how little Culver City can do on its own:

- *“City in the midst of a megalopolis”*
- *“City has little or no control over pollution from cars”*



It is true that working as a region is critical to addressing many sustainability issues. But until Culver City gets its own house in order, creates a vision of what the future should bring, and commits to sustainable actions for Culver City regardless of what the rest of the region does, regional change will not occur.

The SDAT process kicked off with a discussion on how sustainability is becoming “the new black.” Clearly sustainability already resonates in Culver City, building on Westside Los Angeles’s environmental ethic. The challenge is to translate this general support into community vision and consensus.

A Culver City vision can be organized in different ways, but it should build on the Culver City’s sense of place and sustainability values. The following should be discussed in creating a vision:

- Sustainability should guide every decision.
- Sustainability must include environmental, land use, and transportation systems. Community development should help build physical and social connections that enhance the small-city flavor that residents value. A healthy community should be built with emphasis on physical and social health.
- Sustainability must include sustainable economic systems.
- Sustainability must include social equity. Citizen participation should be emphasized and inclusion and diversity should be embraced. A community should be built where city workers can live in the city.

Recommended Actions

- Work with the community over the next six months to create a sustainable vision statement with community input and buy-in
- Use this vision to drive the upcoming general plan
- Use this vision to drive every government policy and action

Community Education and Outreach

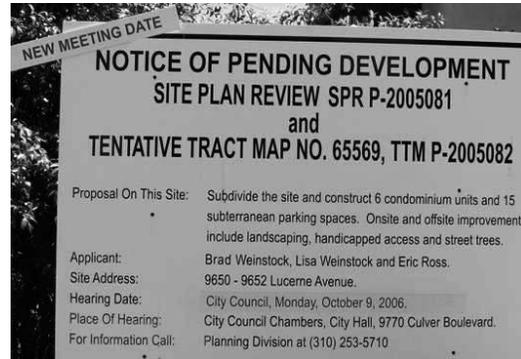
Culver City does a remarkable job in marketing sustainability and the environment. Sustainability and environmental logos abound and staff members in many different city departments are prepared to “talk the talk.” The public education forums held prior to the SDAT visit helped inform the public on sustainability options. Culver City staff has helped build a “community buzz” by its creation of logos and visible sustainability measures. Staff has already planned the next steps necessary for the city’s education and outreach campaign. Culver City should continue and expand the efforts spelled out in city staff planned program. Any program should include

- A component for the city’s schools
- Education on the health and environmental effects of unsustainable practices (e.g., asthma rates, climate change, impacts on human health from lack of exercise)
- Education on how small steps can create massive changes, including how bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly practices can get people out of their cars for short trips, creating less congestion and air pollution and a greater sense of community
- Education on how reform of land-use patterns and transportation systems can increase the sense of community connectivity that makes Culver City feel like the small community that residents prize so much



Community education cannot and should not determine how the community thinks. However, community education can help make sustainability a household word, educate the public, and get sustainability into everyday conversations in households and workplaces throughout the community. Community members can then reflect and participate in community visioning with this new-found awareness.

Education and outreach, including community marketing, can expand the community buzz about sustainability. These efforts can help capitalize community action but a true community sustainability brand, and true paradigm shift to sustainability, requires far more than a simple marketing effort. If branding is what people say about you behind your back, Culver City does not yet have nor does it deserve a sustainability brand. That reputation requires a commitment to fundamental change.



Recommended Actions

- Continue to market sustainability
- Share the costs of not becoming sustainable
- Add a focus on big-picture land-use and transportation systems

Public Participation

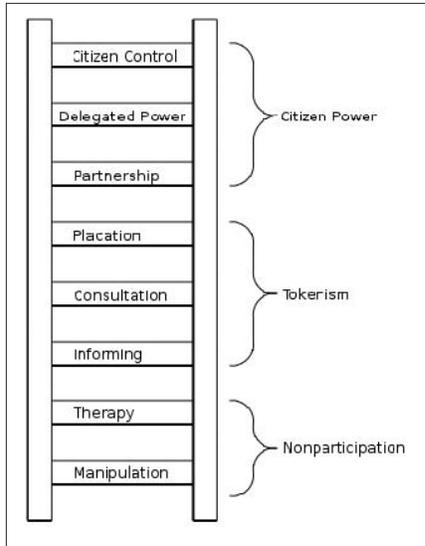
...not trusting in City Hall, but trusting that they own City Hall.

—Rick Cole, former mayor of Pasadena, Calif.

Culver City has a remarkably accessible government and a sense that citizens are part of the process. It already goes further than required in informing the public about hearings and in holding community visioning sessions around specific projects.

During the upcoming Sustainable Plan and General Plan processes, Culver City has the opportunity to renew its emphasis on public participation. Although Culver City’s project-driven participation efforts have been exemplary, the city has not involved citizens in building a citywide consensus on a general sustainability direction. We heard one official say, in what was hoped was a slip of the tongue, “Once we have a plan, we will get community buy-in.” Clearly the order is wrong. The city can and should advocate for sustainability early and often in the process but community buy-in on the overall vision for the community must take place early in the process.

The need to build citizen power is as relevant today as when Sherry Arnstein created her now famous ladder of citizen participation in 1969. Community participation and consensus is the only way to provide the political muscle to make Culver City more sustainable. It is also the best way to improve planning and the most effective way to gather information.



Without community buy-in on sustainability principles, every project and every action will encounter “not-in-my-backyard” (NIMBY) opposition. With community buy-in, NIMBY opposition will still occur but the opposition of a small group can be balanced with big picture community support.

The best citizen participation processes include

- Involving the community as early in the process as possible
- Defining character-defining features and values
- Translating those features and values to actions
- Taking advantage of informal meetings; special events; neighborhood teas; and collaborations with neighborhood watch, service clubs, and other organizations
- Ensuring that all stakeholders are represented (e.g., owners, renters, youth, elderly, day workers)
- Ensuring that all interests, especially those not well represented (e.g., future generations), are represented
- Making every meeting productive so participants feel they make a difference



- Making every meeting fun (food is always useful)
- Working to develop organizations to represent long-term sustainability interests (these organizations are critical to provide a balance to NIMBY opposition to every project that is inevitable in almost every community)
- Translating whatever sustainability consensus is achieved into clear, mission-driven actions

Recommended Actions

- Ensure every stakeholder group and interest is heard
- Build a consensus of shared values
- Support the creation of private sustainability watchdog organizations

Community Leadership

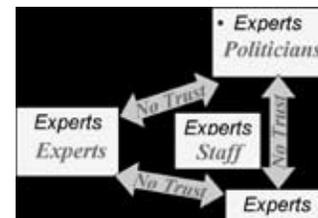
Culver City has many people and entities who are leading the charge for sustainability. Unlike most communities around the country, Culver City is already committed to creating a sustainability plan, making city operations more sustainable, and rethinking past practices. Elected leaders want to improve sustainability, city staff is excited and wants to help lead the charge, and the business and residential communities seem receptive.

Unfortunately the commitment to sustainability is not always translated into action, especially as it relates to land use and transportation.

LEADERSHIP DANGER SIGNS

Danger Signs	Issue
Inconsistencies between planning and zoning	Inconsistencies undercut planning mandate and community consensus. The upcoming general plan revision should address these issues.
Frequent plan amendments	If the new general plan is done well, with community consensus, it should not need to be amended often.
Projects allowed under the plan or zoning not permitted	Regulatory outcomes should be predictable. If projects allowed by zoning are being denied, planning/zoning is out of date or there are leadership failures.
Actions are not focused on sustainability	Community consensus for sustainability has not been achieved or there are leadership failures.

With strong leadership, project proponents and their consultants, elected officials and commissioners, and the public can have a shared vision, and staff can ensure that vision gets implemented. When leadership and community vision fail, decisions become more polarized, staff gets stuck in the middle, and everyone gets frustrated.



Community leadership must redefine their roles if they are going to redefine Culver City as a sustainable or even simply a well-planned community:

- Elected officials and board commissioners must take the lead in the charge for sustainability, talk up the need for sustainability, take risks in moving the city in new directions, and remain committed to the big sustainability picture, even when local opposition springs up to individual steps. We are not seeing this now.

- Staff must advocate for sustainability and for consistency in following through on policies. Staff must build community involvement and consensus to define sustainability and support it through implementation. Staff is already there in its commitment to sustainability, but they have been unable to build the critical mass of community involvement necessary to make it work.
- The community must become involved with and committed to the process. In an era of dual wage earners (which is certainly going to stay with us for a long time) and long commutes (which is not sustainable), community involvement must include the formation of more civic organizations to fight for sustainability. These watchdogs should make governments leaders know that although there may be vocal NIMBY opposition to specific projects, the greater community supports sustainability efforts. The watchdogs should not be a formal part of government because they need the political independence and the independence from public committee process to remain lean and focused.
- Within city government, there should either be a formal steering committee, or city boards, most notably the Planning Board or City Council, should accept sustainability as a clear charge and commit to spending some time at every single meeting evaluating city actions through a sustainability lens.

As part of the post-Katrina planning for the rebirth of New Orleans, some planners worked to identify all of the community groups that should be involved in the process. This effort, the first for New Orleans and something that many cities omit, was designed to empower community groups and ensure that they have a seat at the planning table. Culver City is a much smaller place than New Orleans but it has the opportunity to use existing groups and promote the creation of new groups to build a long-term sustainability dialogue.

Recommended Actions

- Sponsor retreats to build leadership consensus
- Work with the community to define shared values to support goals
- Help facilitate the expansion and creation of nongovernmental civic and watchdog groups dedicated to support sustainability efforts in Culver City
- Practice consistency toward long-term sustainability
- Create an internal sustainability steering committee or use an existing committee that is willing to include sustainability on the agenda of every meeting

Public Participation Benchmarking and Metrics

Benchmarking progress toward sustainability by the use of objective metrics is an effective way to keep progress on track and build a community sustainability buzz. Culver City staff examined Santa Monica’s sustainability program and is interested in adopting some of the elements of this program, including its benchmarking.

Arguably Santa Monica is not as sustainable a community as many other communities around the country. It is, however, a leader in creating a benchmarking program and letting the public know exactly what its status is. Culver City could include many of the metrics that Santa Monica uses in an annual report card of how it is progressing on sustainability. In the public participation area, Culver City might want to make sure it includes the following:

CULVER CITY SUSTAINABILITY BENCHMARKING ONE YEAR AFTER THE SDAT REPORT

Sustainability Metrics	How Measured
Culver City Green Team implements SDAT recommendations	How many recommendations implemented within one year of SDAT report.
City liaison works with commissions and boards to advance cross-cutting sustainability actions	Frequency of discussions of sustainability at city commission and board meetings.
Metrics developed, with citizen participation, for all sustainability measures	Development of metrics or benchmarks that are evaluated yearly for all sustainability areas and are available on the city’s Web site.
Development of sustainable watchdog civic organizations (which may include expanding the role of the Exchange Club, the Chamber of Commerce, and Going Green, and may include new organizations)	Number of civic organizations working in sustainability area and frequency of those organizations providing comments to city commissions.
Put sustainability on agenda at every single meeting of at least one public committee	Frequency of substantive discussions of sustainability at city board meetings.
All stakeholder interests (not just NIMBY) are represented before city boards and commissions	Frequency of comments on sustainability besides immediate neighborhood opposition. Include number of comments from those representing youth, seniors, renters, workers, low-income communities, faith-based organizations, and groups with a city-wide mission.

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Sustainability Metrics	How Measured
Number of people informed about planning meetings	Number of people on e-mail lists maintained by the city or others that are informed of meetings at which sustainability issues are discussed.
Actions consistent with zoning and planning	Evaluation of city investments, policies, and permit applications to determine consistency with planning and zoning objectives.
Voter participation	Evaluation of voter registration and voter participation trends.
Volunteerism in civic projects	Evaluation of number of volunteers and volunteer hours on civic or at least city projects.
Availability of adult basic and continuing education to ensure all have skills to engage in civic life and an open society	Evaluation of the number of residents and workers who can use basic and continuing education services.
Annual sustainability check-in	Annual event to engage the public in the progress of Culver City sustainability efforts.
Leadership support for sustainability	Community and leadership support for sustainability efforts.
Media attention to issues of sustainability	Frequency of substantive news and opinion pieces in local media about Culver City sustainability issues.
City Web site focus on sustainability	Focus on the city Web site on sustainability issues.

The Canopy Development Sustainability Index	
Percentage of Canopy employees who live within a 5-minute walk of the office	67
Percentage of miles driven daily by Canopy employees that are carbon-balanced	100
Pounds of carbon offset for Canopy's board of directors this year	124,000
Number of new trees used to produce Canopy's marketing materials	0
Percentage of food waste that gets composted at Canopy	100
Number of trucks per week that take away Canopy's trash & recycling	0
Number of bicycles per week that take away Canopy's trash & recycling	2
Percentage of socially responsible companies in Canopy's 401k	100
Percentage of Canopy staff members who take sustainability seriously	100

Recommended Actions

- Develop detailed sustainability metrics
- Report annually on the progress toward making Culver City a sustainable community

WASTE MANAGEMENT AND RECYCLING

Through the SDAT process, waste management issues were explored beyond the Culver City's initial objective of enhancing waste reduction and waste diversion through recycling. The city's original purpose (to decrease the amount of solid waste going to the landfill) was also broadened through this process.

The roundtable discussions were initially reframed in terms of integrated solid waste management (ISWM). This paradigm includes source reduction, reuse, recycling, composting, conversion technologies, waste to energy (transformation), and landfiling, with an overarching objective of minimizing waste at each level. The California Integrated Waste Management Board (CIWMB) defines the purpose of integrated solid waste management planning and programs as creating sustainable waste management systems, where all resources are conserved to the maximum extent feasible, greenhouse gases are reduced, and the natural environment is preserved for future generations.



It was also recognized that moving toward sustainability did not require the development of a separate plan to become part of the process of integrating what exists now and where the city wants to be in the future. Progress toward sustainability can be achieved on a day-to-day basis through

- Consistently employing a framework of sustainable concepts when renovating existing programs and policies or building new ones
- Demonstrating sustainable policies and practices throughout all city departments (thereby leading by example and striving to be a model) and becoming actively involved in sustainability initiatives at the regional, state, and federal levels (thereby benefiting from and contributing to larger efforts)
- Building better outreach strategies that promote community awareness, responsibility, participation, and education for all community members

Future changes in Culver City's waste disposal practices are looming on the horizon: within six years, closure of the Puente Hills Landfill could double current waste disposal fees and transportation costs. The city's opportunity and need to redirect its course relative

to diversion versus disposal patterns is vital. Fortunately the city has many positive assets to be proud of and to build upon. The development of creative and actionable goals using a SMART (specific measurable achievable realistic time-based) approach was supported by the SDAT process. Although there are many challenges to overcome, there is every indication that Culver City is in a good position to implement proactive approaches to shape its future waste management programs in sustainable ways.

Strengths

- The city's Sanitation Department (a division of the Culver City Department of Public Works [DPW]) provides exclusive collection services for the city's residents, businesses, and institutions. The DPW's services and operations can be tailored to meet goals and serve the city's needs.
- The DPW exercises control over the city's waste management systems with no competition. For example, rates can be increased gradually and proactively in anticipation of future disposal cost increases (e.g., \$24 per ton now, \$50 per ton in 2013).
- The department owns and operates one of two Westside transfer stations. This facility's capacity permit was recently increased from 500 tons per day (TPD) to 1,056 TPD to accommodate Los Angeles County's green waste. In the future the potential exists for this facility to accommodate increased tonnage or additional customers (e.g., Debuc).
- The DPW uses an automated three-bin system to collect trash, single-stream recyclables, and compostables, which is widely considered to be an optimal system for collecting residential solid waste.
- The city consistently exceeds the 50 percent diversion rate required by the CIWMB.
- Every step toward sustainable waste management will result in decreased disposal costs and increased recycling revenues; thus, the bottom line is a win-win situation.
- There is a six-year window of opportunity to prepare for the 2013 closure of the Puente Hills Landfill. This is a reasonable period of time to plan and implement new programs and policies. This landfill closure provides a strong driver for change.
- The DPW's managers and staff have a strong commitment to customer service, openness to innovation, and many other qualities that will contribute to their success in moving forward.
- Culver City is an enlightened and savvy community; its citizens have a high level of awareness and concern about environmental issues.

- The DPW benefits from many Los Angeles County initiatives (e.g., technical support, planning, programs for electronic waste, household hazardous waste collections).
- There are more than 100 collection and disposal processors in the area (e.g., American Waste, Crowne, Downtown Divers).
- Initiatives such as Culver City’s Green Business Alliance are springing up spontaneously, without any external support.

Weaknesses

- The current \$24-per-ton tip fee for disposal offers little incentive for change today.
- There is no pay-as-you-throw (PAYT) structure. There is some uncertainty that PAYT would prove to be as effective in Culver City as it has been elsewhere as a waste minimization and diversion strategy. In affluent communities with similar demographics, residents are less responsive to the cost savings generally associated with PAYT systems (i.e., price is not as useful as a motivation for change).
- To achieve necessary goals, the DPW needs more resources to move forward. The DPW is currently understaffed. Reportedly there is a lack of political will to increase the DPW’s budget.
- A “psychographic profile” of the city’s population reportedly includes “Bohemian Mix” (19 percent of households), “Money and Brains” (18 percent of households) and “Urban Achievers” (18 percent of households). These demographic types are particularly difficult to reach. Creative outreach strategies, ranging from preschool education programs to technical assistance in establishing workplace recycling policies, will be necessary to target members of this busy, young-adult population.
- Multifamily units appear to be underserved; they require technical assistance and equipment (e.g., individual bins and other collection containers) to set up recycling systems. Ongoing education efforts will also be necessary because tenants represent a relatively transient population.
- The city does not have a composting site, and there is a general pessimism that one could be developed due to community perceptions that composting sites are “dumps” that create odor problems.
- Reportedly Culver City’s districts and neighborhoods are poorly organized. The structure of political districting creates factions on a variety of issues.

- In terms of protecting the DPW's workers, residential programs for the collection of universal wastes (i.e., mercury-containing products), eWaste, sharps, household hazardous wastes, and unwanted/unused medications are not promoted enough or are not convenient enough to keep these materials out of the waste stream.
- Excess packaging of products is beyond local jurisdiction, and the local Board of Health currently restricts certain reuse options at local food stores and restaurants.

Threats

- Local landfill closures will eliminate the city's current cheap disposal fees after 2013.
- The low disposal fees currently enjoyed by the city make diversion options appear to be less cost-effective in the short term.
- New programs cost money to implement. Reportedly, there is a lack of focus by (and funding from) the political leadership to support new ISWM initiatives.
- While certainly not unique to this city, there is a certain amount of institutional, communal, and individual resistance to change. The lack of education about emerging issues and apathy present challenges to increasing public awareness and participation.

Recommendations

In order for Culver City fully integrate sustainability and waste management policies and programs, a strategic plan can be organized around the following fundamental categories:

- Municipal leadership and excellence. The city's administration and staff must lead on the local level and become more involved in sustainable initiatives at the regional, state, and federal levels.
- Community education and awareness. Increased community awareness, responsibility, participation, and education must be a priority.
- Expansion of existing systems and operations. Culver City's DPW has many opportunities to improve and to build upon its current services to achieve sustainable waste management systems.
- Highest maximum efficiency in the management of materials (zero waste). The city should develop, adopt, and implement a Zero Waste Challenge action plan that defines specific benchmarks.

Municipal Leadership and Excellence

- Involve government in moving toward sustainability as the public sector is in a unique position to influence social change. The private sector will sometimes lead and sometimes follow but Culver City must assume a leading role.
- Expand the DPW's resources (e.g., staff and budget) to achieve the city's integrated solid waste management goals. In particular more staff is needed to expand the city's technical assistance and outreach programs to businesses and multifamily housing units. Properly executed, these increased expenditures will result in a win-win situation because disposal costs will be reduced as revenues (from marketable materials and enforcement efforts) are increased. In addition (due to its exclusive control of all waste streams) the DPW will be able to adjust rate structures over time to support all necessary personnel and programs.
- Create an action plan to reduce the city's paper consumption by 50 percent by 2010, using green team reps from City Hall; DPW; the police, fire, and parks/recreation departments; schools; and other city entities. In addition to decreasing paper consumption, equal emphasis should be placed on increasing recycling participation and capture rates of paper at all municipal facilities. The action plan should outline how progress will be measured and rewarded.
- Focus on school participation and education programs on an ongoing basis. Educating children at school is an effective method for educating their parents at home (adults who might not be accessible by traditional outreach methods). Support the development of lead teachers by providing resources (e.g., recycling and solid waste lesson plans, activities for green teams, incentive and recognition programs). The DPW should explore creative bottom-line opportunities with the school board, such as providing equipment, resources, labor, financial incentives (e.g., revenue sharing for recyclables, waste disposal discounts for tonnage reductions), and award and recognition programs based on the achievement of specific diversion goals.
- Create and enforce governmental Buy Recycled and Toxics Reduction procurement policies.
- Become actively involved with and benefit from state and federal programs and initiatives. The city can apply for grants from CIWMB; the U.S. Departments of Commerce, Agriculture, and Energy; and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency; as well as CIWMB's Waste Reduction Awards Program Awards. The CIWMB is promoting several new priorities, such as conversion technologies

(thermal, biological, and chemical) with the potential of managing biomass and organic wastes while producing locally renewable energy and green fuels (e.g., ethanol, biodiesel, electricity). The city could seek support from the CIWMB to participate in new programs in the region (e.g., Sun Valley, Bakersfield, Green Mountain).

- Demonstrate commitment to regional, state, and federal initiatives by adopting a city-wide mandatory recycling ordinance, signing the U.S. Mayors' Climate Protection Agreement, joining ICLEI (Local Governments for Sustainability), and adopting a resolution to achieve zero waste by 2020.
- Adopt an ordinance (similar to Santa Monica's and Pasadena's) that requires developers to deposit 10 percent of the project value with the city, to be refunded with documentation that a minimum of 50 percent of all construction waste produced was diverted from disposal.

EXPANSION OF EXISTING SYSTEMS AND OPERATIONS

- Increase recycling collections to once per week. Any major program change represents an opportunity to reeducate customers. In this case, the focus of the campaign should be to increase the capture rates for fiber. Paper and old corrugated containers represent low-hanging fruit.
- Implement a residential PAYT program. Currently all residents pay the same rate for waste collection, and this does nothing to promote integrated solid waste management goals. A PAYT system compatible with automation could be adopted in a variety of ways (e.g., weight-based as determined by actual pounds, volume-based as determined by container size employed, user-based as determined by set-out rates with radiofrequency distribution tags). Although offering different size containers at different rates might be seen as ideal for automated systems, this conversion would prove to be costly and time-consuming. Instead the city could investigate charging for trash collection on a setout basis using a tag-reader system. This approach would increase collection route efficiencies while rewarding residents for their waste prevention efforts. This version of PAYT would be particularly effective if there was a corresponding increase in the collection of putrescible waste (e.g., food waste) at the same time. Changes in the residential billing system (e.g., free collection of recyclables and compostables, a per-set-out rate for trash collection) also would make PAYT more effective. A full-cost analysis will be necessary to evaluate this recommendation.
- Consider purchasing smaller trash containers in the future, phasing out the use of 95-gallon carts.

- Collect residential and commercial source-separated organics (e.g., vegetative and plant debris, food waste, nonrecyclable paper, wood, thereby representing the largest potential for reducing disposal rates. CIWMB estimates that 80 percent of waste landfilled in California is organic. Culver City has nearly 150 eateries and several supermarkets, providing for many economies of scale. Options for the diversion of source-separated organics should be actively explored, including the animal feed facility in Valenta. The oil fields also may represent an opportunity for combining bioremediation and siting of a composting facility.
- Create a field technician position to provide targeted, customized technical assistance for underserved residential populations (e.g., multifamily and condominium properties) and small-to medium-size businesses to maximize their diversion efforts. Use Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) codes and economic development data to identify priority business customers. Commercial cooperatives could be developed where space for collection containers is an issue. The field technician also would be responsible for enforcement.
- Employ work-study students and interns to survey large businesses to determine the status of their waste management programs and what they need to do a better job. Provide recognition for their successes.
- Create real financial incentives and disincentives for the commercial sector to comply with the city's waste diversion requirements for recyclable and compostable materials. This could be accomplished through the adoption of a mandatory recycling ordinance, with strong provisions for enforcement, including fines. Incentives for obtaining and using recyclable bins and green waste could include the use of variable rates for trash disposal (making it expensive for commercial customers to make little or no effort to divert materials).
- Identify waste containing excessive amounts of recyclable and compostable materials, apply surcharges or fines, and give the story to the media. If the CIWMB has not already done so, ban clean wood waste and certain inert materials (such as asphalt pavement, brick, and concrete) from the construction and demolition waste stream on the local level.
- Plan and implement new pilot programs for residential waste reduction and reuse (e.g., compost bin distributions, one-day community reuse and recycling events). Offer workshops on topics such as Master Recycling and Backyard Composting.
- Use ordinances or regulations to restrict the distribution of plastic bags and Styrofoam containers in grocery stores, food stores, and restaurants.

COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

- Use global warming as a unifying theme for waste prevention programs. Highlight the benefits of recycling by employing models and calculators, such as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's warm model.
- Foster a sense of community pride that the city is actively working toward being a sustainable, green city. As a component of the city's branding and recognition programs, its innovative approaches to waste management should augment this image. Santa Monica, Pasadena, San Francisco, and other cities have been paving the way but the potential exists for Culver City to be at the forefront.
- Create programs to recognize outstanding efforts that advance the cause of sustainability by all sectors of the community.
- Design and implement creative outreach approaches for the entire community, including municipal government (employees and contractors); residents (all demographic groups); community-based organizations; small, medium-sized, large, and extra-large businesses; public and private schools and colleges; institutions; developers; the city's 200,000+ nonresident workforce; and tourists and visitors.
- Distribute information at community events and promote the city's Web site as a source for further information. Develop a speaker program and conduct community presentations.
- Add convenient public space recycling containers and investigate the efficacy of removing some of the public trash cans currently managed by the city (currently reported as 550 trash cans at bus stops, in pedestrian areas, and in parks).
- Involve the DPW in the city's efforts to upgrade its Web site. The DPW should be involved in this process to ensure that the Web site will be an effective tool for public education and outreach efforts.
- Publicize existing opportunities in the region, including but not limited to Planet Aid, the Goodwill and Salvation Army thrift stores, craigslist.org, Freecycle, Los Angeles paint recycling, the Clare Foundation, the Saint Vincent DePaul Society, the Tick Tock Thrift Shop, Cal Max, LA Share, and LA CoMax. In addition, a Culver materials exchange could be created and linked to the city's Web site. This service could be managed by an Environmental Studies class at the local community college.

HIGHEST MAXIMUM EFFICIENCY IN THE MANAGEMENT
OF MATERIALS (ZERO WASTE)

- Move from integrated waste management strategy toward a zero waste management policy by setting aggressive goals (e.g., 75 percent waste diversion by 2010, more than 90 percent by 2020). Adopt a zero waste resolution and an action plan for achieving a more than 90 percent diversion rate and the elimination of harmful products, with specific benchmarks to measure progress.

ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION AND PUBLIC HEALTH PROTECTION

Culver City's main goal is to achieve a sustainable drinking water supply to satisfy the needs of its current and future residents, minimize any adverse impacts due to environmental pollution, and protect public health.



Do your share for clean air



Turn off your engine when waiting

- Exhaust fumes from cars, trucks and buses contain fine particles that can trigger asthma attacks. These exhaust fumes are produced unnecessarily when vehicles idle. Children are particularly vulnerable because their lungs are still developing and they breathe 50 percent more, by volume, than adults.
- Idling vehicles also produce nitrogen oxides, which contributes to smog, and carbon dioxide, which contributes to global warming.
- Excessive idling is not good for your car. It is better to shut off your engine if you stop for more than 10 seconds, unless you are in traffic. Limit warm-up idling in winter to 30 seconds – the best way to warm up your vehicle is to drive it.
- It is against the law in Massachusetts to idle unnecessarily for more than 5 minutes.

The Department of Environmental Protection is working with communities across Massachusetts to reduce our exposure to air pollution from idling vehicles. For more information on air quality in Massachusetts, please visit DEP's website at:

<http://www.mass.gov/dep/bwp/daqc/daqchome.htm>

The issues that need to be addressed to develop a sustainable community plan include but are not limited to the following:

1. Comply with California's mandated requirement to reduce imported water over the next 15 years by reducing a fair share of the water that the city currently imports
2. Reduce hazardous substance inputs to air, water, and land
3. Manage hazardous materials and their disposal from residential, commercial, and industrial sources
4. Manage the city's purchases of hazardous and toxic materials
5. Improve emergency response protocols
6. Reduce beach closures
7. Reduce urban runoff
8. Increase the sale of organically grown produce and serve it in the city's facilities
9. Ameliorate Ballona Creek and enhance the aesthetics of its surrounding areas

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats

An analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) of the relevant programs currently implemented by the city was first made in a workshop setting, and the inputs from many stakeholders, including city staff members present, were considered.

Strengths

- The city is a small and manageable community, composed of about 40,000 residents.
- The city has the second oldest bus line in the state, established in 1928, and favors public transportation. The city also has bike paths and plans to establish more. Also, the Exposition Railway, to connect the city with Santa Monica, is in its future plans.
- To reduce emissions from public vehicles, the city initiated in 1998 a plan to convert its entire fleet to run on compressed natural gas (CNG). The city also has a compressed week schedule for employees to save trips, thereby reducing miles traveled. To reduce ambient dust and keep its streets clean, the city sweeps them once a week. The city is certified by the state as a Green Model Shop transportation facility.
- To reduce toxic pollution loads to the environment, the city has a proactive collection program for hazardous wastes such as oil and electronic components. Also, the city has a program for recycling materials sorted from solid waste collected from the community and an emergency plan to respond rapidly to any emergencies.
- The city actively participates in the Ballona Creek clean-up efforts by collaborating with intercity business and citizen groups and participating in their meetings and other activities.
- To conserve water, the city has begun to install waterless urinals in public buildings.
- Antioch University, located in the city, is proactive on environmental issues, as is Sony Pictures Entertainment.



Weaknesses

- Residents have concerns about groundwater quality, and information is hard to find.
- There is a lack of coordination/communication among city and other governmental agencies, such as the County and Air Quality Management District (AQMD), regarding air and water quality information.
- The city is dependent on outside water sources and purveyors.



- Although the city discharges its wastewater into a collection system managed by Los Angeles County, it has currently no access to obtain processed wastewater for uses such as irrigation.
- The city does not have formal plans in place for efficient use of water and water conservation, although California has mandates to reduce the state's use of imported water in 15 years by about 1 million acre-feet or 326 billion gallons.
- Air pollution in the city is a major concern because of its proximity to two major highways. Air pollution caused daily by hundreds of thousand of autos belonging to outsiders that use the two highways that traverse the city is detrimental to the health of city residents.
- The city is vulnerable to unfunded environmental mandates.
- Current regulations either inhibit or do not promote groundwater recharge from urban stormwater runoff. Existing impermeable surfaces, such as pavements, driveways, and parking lots, are not conducive to groundwater recharge.
- It appears that there are no formal programs to grow produce organically and use it in city facilities.

Opportunities

- Opportunities exist for water conservation. Rainwater harvesting (RWH) provides a significant opportunity for conserving water when it rains. Homeowners, commercial entities, places of worship, institutional facilities, and local industries should be encouraged to implement cistern and graywater usage systems and irrigate landscapes with the water harvested and recycled.
- Recycling and reusing treated wastewater for appropriate applications will promote water conservation and reduce the quantity of water that must be imported and paid for.

- Replacing impervious surfaces with porous pavements will allow a reduction of stormwater runoff and promote groundwater recharge. In turn, by proper management of urban runoff, beach closures can be minimized.
- Highway median strips can be replaced with porous pavement and landscaping. If these areas are designed so that processed effluent can be used for irrigation, carbon sequestration and nutrient inputs to waterways can be accomplished by growing trees. Opportunities exist for obtaining and trading carbon credits. Carbon sequestration is particularly beneficial in Southern California, where air pollution is acute.
- Food waste can be segregated and composted. The compost produced can be used to raise organically grown produce.
- Wetland and recreational opportunities around Ballona Creek should be explored for aesthetic benefits and potential opportunities for businesses to flourish. The city should work with a broad group of stakeholder representatives toward a joint solution that can actively improve the Ballona Creek watershed.
- Instead of the city running hazardous waste round-ups once or twice a year, more hazardous wastes can be collected at a greater frequency for safe handling and disposal by neighborhood groups and nongovernmental organizations if incentives are provided to them by awarding them city block development grants funding combined with other sources.
- By encouraging carpooling and providing alternative transportation to workplaces and schools, emissions can be reduced and energy resources conserved.
- Provision of incentives for implementing green building/planning standards as per Leadership in Environmental and Energy Design (LEED®) norms will be beneficial to overall environmental improvement.

Threats

- Financial commitments for overall improvements in environmental quality will always be a concern.
- Meeting the challenge of unfunded mandates can be a deterrent to sustainability measures and improvements to environmental quality.

- Resistance to regulations by the public and local industry and perceived loss of freedom will be an impediment to undertake major projects to improve the environment.
- Loss of local control of environmental programs is a concern.
- There is always the threat of penalties for not complying with regulations.
- Beach closures are a concern of the public as well as regulators.
- The public is fearful of the degradation of the ecosystem and public health due to pollution and asks for more amenities while being averse to an increase in taxes to pay for these services and amenities.

SWOT Analysis

From the foregoing results of the SWOT analysis, the areas of major concern that emerged for taking necessary action to achieve sustainability are as follows with regard to environmental pollution and public health:

- Water conservation
- Reduction in the release of hazardous substances into water, air, and land environment, and management of hazardous materials and their disposal
- Timely, well-coordinated emergency response
- Prevention of beach closures due to sewage spills
- Reduction in urban runoff
- Ballona Creek rehabilitation and enhancement

The organic growing of produce and using it in city facilities is not considered to be a pressing problem, as the city lacks agricultural land. Perhaps the city can encourage homeowners to grow vegetables in their backyards by using city-provided compost. The city can blend biodegradable organic waste materials such as food and vegetable wastes collected from restaurants and homes and any other biodegradable materials collected from city facilities, such as parks and schools, and compost them. Alternatively community groups and nongovernmental organizations can undertake the composting activity under a grant program.

Recommendations

The recommendations are delineated below for each of the above areas:

Water Conservation

- Investigate measures to maximize water conservation and minimize water use, and institute as many of these measures as possible to save ≈ 7 percent of the current allocation of imported water each year for the next 15 years.
- Audit the water use of various public, commercial, and industrial establishments and devise means to annually reduce water usage by 7 percent of the amount of imported water.
- Institute RWH by all public, commercial, and industrial buildings to conserve water by groundwater recharge or storage in cisterns.
- Explore the possibility of recharging the aquifer from water flowing through the Ballona Creek watershed.
- Intensify efforts to inform and educate the public regarding the importance of water conservation. For example, celebrate World Water Day, Earth Day, and World Environment Day.
- Introduce water conservation concepts as part of elementary, middle, and high school education curricula.
- Require that new construction contain 1.6-gallon-per-flush toilets, and all toilets in public buildings be replaced with these, using incentives and mandates.
- Make it mandatory to install waterless units in all public, commercial, and industrial facilities.
- Enter into long-term agreements with existing purveyors to supply high-quality drinking water at an affordable cost to the city.
- Investigate obtaining processed effluent from Los Angeles and Los Angeles County Sanitation Facilities for subsequent use (e.g., fire fighting, irrigation).
- Create tiered water pricing to discourage excess water use.

- Investigate and promote alternative technologies to conserve water, including technologies to treat and store graywater (from sinks, baths, showers) for reuse.
- Revise building codes governing rehabilitation and new construction to mandate water conservation measures.
- Encourage (or make mandatory, if necessary) the use of artificial turf instead of natural turf grasses.
- Restrict and ration lawn watering.
- Pass ordinances as needed to achieve targets.
- Continue working with the West Basin Water District to develop a plan of action that strives to conserve water and looks at ways to expand the use of recycled water.

Management of Hazardous Materials and Reduction of Release of Hazardous Substances into Environment

- Lobby for the city to take charge of existing programs, with timely reporting to Los Angeles County, to improve controls and monitoring.
- Increase the frequency of hazardous materials collections.
- Encourage the growth of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) through community block development grants and other means to pick up hazardous materials from residences and deliver them to collection centers.
- Work with commercial and businesses to help them with proper hazardous materials disposition measures.
- Explore the possibilities of waste exchange programs among industries and businesses.

Emergency Response

- Review the city's existing emergency plan and modify it as needed. Once it is approved, take measures to proactively ensure its proper implementation.
- Ensure effective interdepartmental communications and coordination for fault-proof implementation.

- Train employees and conduct mock drills to ascertain level of readiness for citywide emergency situations.
- Should a sewage or hazardous material spill occur, immediately inform the appropriate authorities (e.g., the Los Angeles County Health Department or the Water Board) to take appropriate action.

Prevention of Beach Closures

- Develop and/or upgrade sewer and pump station maintenance manuals
- Conduct regular training programs for sewer and pump maintenance crews
- Prevent spills by implementing and enforcing regular inspection schedules; maintenance and cleaning schedules; and fats, oils, and grease control ordinances
- Institute updated best management practices by implementing required total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) on an accelerated basis, providing means to contain spills, providing back-up pump systems at pumping stations, providing means to bypass spills as per an approved diversion plan, and ensuring that illicit sewage discharges are not made to Ballona Creek
- Should a sewage or hazardous material spill occur, immediately inform the appropriate authorities (e.g., the Los Angeles County Health Department or the Water Board) to take appropriate action

Reduction of Urban Runoff

- Develop or update the city's urban runoff management plans and enforce these
- Encourage permeable pavements and buffer zones where appropriate
- Encourage and implement RWH and construct cisterns where feasible
- Provide incentives to developers to capture rainwater and reduce urban runoff
- Implement low-impact development (LID) and LEED guidelines
- Develop pilot programs to determine the best way to prevent pollution from urban runoff
- Plant trees and drought-tolerant, naturally occurring vegetation in highway medians, open spaces, and parks to retain runoff and enhance percolation.

Ballona Creek Rehabilitation and Enhancement

- Continue to cooperate with other stakeholder groups and nongovernmental organizations that are actively working on the improvements of Ballona Creek
- Explore the possibility of modifying the concrete lining of the creek bed within the city's jurisdiction to allow water percolation along the creek
- Implement a program to monitor the creek's water quality upstream and downstream of the city
- Explore the possibility of developing the banks of Ballona Creek for aesthetics and recreation

Conclusions—Strategy for Achieving Sustainability and Indicators of Performance

To attain sustainability goals and measures to control water pollution, assure the water supply to meet future demands, and protect public health, it is important to develop a strategy for implementing these recommendations and a protocol to measure progress achieved once the recommendations have been implemented. Performance indicators should be developed to measure progress. A practical schedule for passing various laws and distributing guidelines for water conservation and measures addressing environmental pollution and public health should be developed. The progress made needs to be gauged against this timetable. In the Appendix, Table 1 can be used as a model to develop a detailed sustainability plan. This can be further defined as per the needs, expectations, and determination of the city council and city administration.

California has mandated that imported water use be reduced during the next 15 years by 1 million-acre feet (about 20 billion gallons per year). The city should conserve water by reducing imported water use by about 7 percent annually as its share. Also, as per EPA mandate, all TMDLs imposed on Ballona Creek should be in compliance by 2021. Given these deadlines for complying with TMDLs and reducing imported water use, the city should consider developing its sustainable city plan and implementing it before these deadlines come to pass. Accordingly the city should plan based on the recommendations made and closely monitor progress so that the timelines for

achieving the desired results are met to ensure a sustainable water supply and pollution control. As water directly or indirectly impacts all areas of development, the city needs to streamline all of its activities pertaining to housing, transportation, energy conservation, and other sectors to prevent any deficiencies from occurring in one area that might otherwise adversely affect another's sustainability. Hence it is important to understand the interconnectivity of factors in all areas. Communication among departments is crucial for the successful implementation of a well-conceived, sustainable city plan. Outreach activities and public education are equally important to ensure acceptance by the general public. A focused curriculum should be implemented at elementary, middle, and high school levels to educate children in environmental protection and sustainability. Acceptance and implementation of a sustainable plan will be easier if all stakeholders are involved in each step of formulating the plan.

RESOURCE CONSERVATION

The Culver City Sustainable Community Plan identifies resource conservation as one of six primary goal areas for the city. The Sustainable Community Plan (SCP) describes this goal as follows:

Promote the conservation, reduction, reuse, and recycling of renewable and nonrenewable resources.

Under this broad goal, the plan identifies four broad topics to be addressed under the goal of resource conservation:

- Developing programs to reduce energy usage and develop alternative green power programs
- Enhancing water conservation programs
- Reducing automobile fuel consumption
- Reducing the city's paper consumption by 50 percent

Each of these four topics represents a broad and ambitious program. During the course of the discussions with the SDAT members, city staff, and citizens, it became clear that two of the four issues had more logical “homes” under other SCP goals. For example, reducing the city's paper consumption by 50 percent has a strong nexus to the Solid Waste Management and Recycling goal. Furthermore, enhancing water conservation programs is closely related to the stormwater, beach closures, and other water quality issues described under Environmental Pollution and Public Health. Although the public meetings of the Resource Conservation group discussed each of the four topics, for this final report, the SDAT covered the discussion of these two issues in other sections of this report.

Therefore, this section of the report is limited to two broad topics: energy programs and reducing automobile fuel consumption. A third topic addresses Ballona Creek, with specific recommendations for stormwater management and treatment. As with all public meetings covering the city's six goal areas, the Resource Conservation group discussions began with an analysis of the SWOTs.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats

On two occasions during the SDAT visit, members of the public, city staff, team members, and other stakeholders convened to discuss a sustainability plan for Culver City. Each meeting included a SWOT analysis for each broad goal for the city. This section describes the SWOT analysis for energy programs and reducing automobile use.

Strengths: Energy Programs

- Favorable climate
- Consistent sunshine
- Good solar potential
- Progressive, well-educated public
- Strong state leadership
- The city's small size allows for rapid change
- Good local professionals and technical expertise



Weaknesses: Energy Programs

- Many old, uninsulated buildings—energy-inefficient
- Car-dependent; love affair with the automobile
- High daytime population
- High cost of importing water
- Zoning code is silent on energy use
- Conservation and efficiency not part of the culture
- Lack of mass transit options
- No local power generation
- Perception of an inexhaustible resource
- Low percentage of renewable energy



Opportunities: Energy Programs

- More renewable energy
- Use more photovoltaics (PV) and solar thermal
- Green roofs
- Water conservation
- Natural ventilation
- Culver City can lead by example
- Retrocommissioning of existing buildings
- More bicycle and walking traffic



Threats: Energy Programs

- Reduced revenue from reduced consumption
- Least cost versus life-cycle costs
- Climate change
- Limited resources and competing priorities
- Short-term thinking
- Externalities are not part of costs
- Low cost of energy
- The California Energy Commission, the California Public Utilities Commission, and the Southern California Edison Corporation set energy policy
- Vehicle dependency
- Economies of scale needed for PV

Strengths: Reducing Automobile Fuel Consumption

- Engaged local leadership
- City buses and some trash trucks have been converted to run on CNG
- Additional conversion of fleet vehicles planned

- Access to technology
- The existing transportation system
- The South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) requires reduced emissions
- Favorable climate
- Flat topography

Weaknesses: Reducing Automobile Fuel Consumption

- The city is planned around the automobile
- Low-density land use
- Through traffic
- Dispersed—spread-out city
- Vehicle/pedestrian conflicts
- Car culture
- Traffic congestion
- High daytime influx
- Natural gas perceived as a panacea

Opportunities: Reducing Automobile Fuel Consumption

- Increase bicycle and pedestrian traffic
- More hybrids and electric vehicles
- Carpooling/car sharing
- Mixed-use development districts
- Hire locally
- Telecommuting
- Reduce required parking
- Create affordable housing
- Increase parking costs

- Mass transit connection (light rail)
- Promote Web-based services as an alternative to visiting City Hall
- Install vehicle-charging stations

Threats: Reducing Automobile Fuel Consumption

- Inexpensive gasoline
- Cheap gas guzzlers
- Freedom and independence of the automobile
- Point-to-point trips
- Needs of the auto service industry
- Taxi industry

Recommendations

The SWOT analysis produced a detailed list of ideas, concerns, suggestions, and opportunities for Culver City. Based on the SWOT analysis, the SDAT evaluated the feedback from the various stakeholders, and developed the recommendations summarized in this section.

Develop Programs to Reduce Energy Usage and Develop Alternative Green Power Programs

- Install PV panels on public buildings, promote solar thermal water heating, and build on the state tax incentives for private PV projects. Culver City’s consistent sunlight makes it an ideal location for PV technology and solar thermal water heating. Both technologies hold the potential to reduce energy costs and promote renewable energy. Culver City should look for opportunities to install PV panels on and use solar thermal water heating in public buildings. California has similar programs and Culver City should review the state’s programs in detail for opportunities to capitalize on the programs and incentives offered by the state.
- Conduct an energy audit of public buildings and implement cost-effective conservation and efficiency measures. Energy audits can identify simple and cost-effective ways of conserving energy, promoting energy efficiency, and promoting alternative fuels.

Although the city has made some efforts in the past to audit energy performance in public buildings, the city should maximize the use of audits to continuously identify methods to increase the city's public buildings' energy performance.

- Explore the use of energy performance contracting when procuring energy services for the city. Some energy service companies (such as energy utilities) and equipment manufacturers offer energy performance contracts. Under an energy performance contract, a vendor will offer services such as installation, maintenance, retrocommissioning, or other energy-related services, and guarantee savings as a result. The recipient of the services usually pays a fee that captures the future savings from the improved energy performance. Culver City should explore energy performance contracting as a way of financing energy investments in the city's public buildings. Energy performance contracting can provide cost-effective financing of initial capital investments in energy conservation, efficiency, and renewable energy.
- Benchmark the city's energy performance using measures such as kilowatt-hours or dollars saved and post the results on the city's Web site. Energy performance lends itself to quantifiable measures such as dollars or kilowatt-hours saved. Culver City should develop a method to measure the city's progress using agreed-upon measures, and then make the results available to the public on the city's Web site.
- Using the state's renewable portfolio standard as a guide, establish a target for procuring renewable energy (e.g., California's target of 20 percent by 2010 and 33 percent by 2020). The renewable portfolio standard for the State of California requires that a minimum percentage of the state's energy production be derived from renewable sources of energy. Culver City could adopt the state's standards, or a more ambitious standard, as a way of expanding the market for renewable energy, and signaling a commitment to maximize Southern California's solar power potential.
- Adopt and implement a green-building policy, requiring city-owned buildings to achieve a minimum certification, and establish incentives for private construction projects. One component of a green building policy could be to adopt the state's energy reduction goals for public buildings (reduce energy use by 20 percent from the 2003 baseline by 2010). Green buildings promote energy and water conservation, often use recycled building materials, and can increase productivity by the people who work in them. Many cities and counties across the country are adopting green building policies that require public buildings to meet a recognized standard or certification level. Such a policy by Culver City will contribute to the city's many sustainability goals.

- Sign the U.S. Conference of Mayors' Climate Protection Agreement. Nearly 500 cities nationwide have signed on to the climate protection agreement of the U.S. Conference of Mayors. The agreement would require Culver City to commit to reducing emissions of greenhouse gases to 1990 levels by 2012, the same levels in the Kyoto Protocol. The biggest source of greenhouse gases is the combustion of fossil fuels. The SDAT recommendations include numerous suggestions that would reduce greenhouse gas emissions. If Culver City were to implement the energy-related recommendations in this SDAT report, then the city would be performing many of the same activities required by a strategy to reduce greenhouse gases. For relatively little extra effort, the city could demonstrate significant reductions in greenhouse gases and take credit for its climate change initiatives.

Reduce Automobile Fuel Consumption

- Create bicycle lanes. The SWOT analysis on the goal of reducing automobile fuel consumption highlighted significant challenges for Culver City. The city has significant through-traffic that adds considerably to vehicle miles traveled within Culver City, and our nation's dependence on and attachment to the automobile is particularly strong in Southern California. Nonetheless, Culver City has many opportunities to reduce automobile fuel consumption. Most of the city has flat topography and is therefore amenable to bicycle travel. Thus, the city should add bicycle lanes to the streets and look for opportunities to redesign streets to encourage bicycle travel.
- Promote telecommuting, ride-sharing, and carpooling programs. Each day of the work week, employees of movie studios and other large employers in Culver City commute into the city. Thus the city experiences a large daily influx of commuters, contributing to traffic congestion and increased automobile exhaust. The city should reach out to large Culver City employers to encourage telecommuting, carpooling, and ride sharing. These programs, especially telecommuting, are growing in popularity and are effective in reducing vehicular traffic.
- Encourage workforce housing and higher-density development in appropriate locations. Culver City enjoys a high standard of living, but many of the people who commute into the city cannot afford to live there. This increases the daily influx of vehicles and automobile fuel consumed within the city. The city should plan for and encourage workforce housing that would allow more of the workers who commute into Culver City to live in the city. Also Culver City should plan for and encourage higher-density housing, especially near mass transit. This approach will provide for workforce housing, promote the use of mass transit, and reduce the daily influx of automobiles into Culver City.

Recommendations for Ballona Creek

Culver City should evaluate natural treatment systems and constructed wetlands to manage and treat stormwater. Culver City is confronted with significant challenges concerning stormwater. The city is subject to the terms and conditions of a stormwater permit required by the Clean Water Act. The permit requires the city to meet targets for trash, bacteria, and metals, during both wet-weather and dry-weather flows, and establishes interim and final deadlines ranging from 2012 (for trash) to 2020 (for bacteria). The city is in the early stages of managing these obligations and developing a method for financing the required activities under the permit.

Culver City's stormwater runoff drains into Ballona Creek. The creek moves water rapidly through the waterway, and a primary treatment system captures trash from the runoff. The creek does not currently provide any treatment for the bacteria and metals in the stormwater. The creek bed's concrete lining prevents groundwater recharge and contributes to seawater infiltration of groundwater in West Los Angeles.

Any effort to meet the standards in the stormwater permit will be a substantial and costly undertaking. As the city develops options for meeting the permit limits, the city should include an evaluation of natural treatment systems and constructed wetlands to manage and treat stormwater. Built wetlands can treat urban runoff from dry-weather and small-storm flows. The wetlands act like sponges to absorb water and recharge groundwater. The wetlands use vegetation to absorb sediment, pathogens, nutrients, and other pollutants and provide a community with a natural resource, riparian habitat, wildlife, and improved water quality. Built wetlands often are a cost-effective and environmentally sound alternative for managing and treating stormwater, and the city should include natural treatment systems in the options considered to meet the city's stormwater challenges.

SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION

If you don't know where you're going, then any old road will do.

—The Cheshire Cat to Alice in *Alice in Wonderland*, Lewis Carroll

The challenge for the current generation of humans is to develop a shared vision that is both desirable to the vast majority of humanity and ecologically sustainable.

—Robert Costanza, Director, Institute for Ecological Economics, University of Maryland

Mobility is a fundamental indicator of quality of life and thus plays an important role in a sustainable future. The degree to which human beings are able to come into contact with each other and access the goods and services they need to survive has social, economic, and environmental implications. Our communication technology now allows us to access virtual and remote places without being there physically. We can use telephones, televisions, and computers for such tasks as sharing information, completing transactions, and participating in arts and culture. These modes of communication have served to reduce our transportation needs. However, the demand for physical displacement remains and depends on an array of modes suited to the distance to be traveled, some of which impact the health of our planet. How does transportation fit into the sustainability equation? What can Culver City do specifically to support travel choices that will lead to a sustainable future?

Background

Each travel mode should be evaluated for two sets of environmental impacts that influence sustainability: chemical and spatial. First, travel choices can affect air quality and the level of greenhouse gases from carbon dioxide emissions. Transportation dependent on burning fossil fuels is considered to be the leading contributor to climate change and global warming, with wide-ranging, negative impacts on biodiversity, ecosystems, and water supplies. Additionally each trip has a spatial aspect—the amount of space needed for such uses as pathways and storing vehicles—which varies with each mode. Travel modes also compete with other land uses for available open space and affect congestion and transit delays, which are surface transportation problems that arise when the demand for low-cost vehicle travel exceeds the road supply. Largely because of its pattern of low-density development and increasing population served mostly by private vehicles, the Los Angeles region is the most congestion-prone in the nation. Recently, the new City of Los Angeles planning director, Gail Goldberg, remarked that Los Angeles can accommodate another 1 million people but not the road capacity for the 685,000 cars the new residents would bring, or the 37 square miles of additional parking spaces to accommodate these vehicles, given current behavior and expectations.

The Mobility Paradigm and Pyramid: “The New Transit Diet”

As the population continues to grow, so does the need for “cleaner” fuels and the efficient use of space. It is a fallacy to believe that conversion to biodiesel or other environment-friendly fuels will eliminate the problem of increasing drive-alone rates and resulting congestion. Unless we change the way we get around, we will still be stuck in traffic, idling in our fuel-efficient cars. The following list forms the basis for a mobility pyramid, a new transit “diet,” and a paradigm for a healthier and greener planet. Typical modes of travel in urban areas are listed in ascending order relative to their impact on air quality, carbon emissions, congestion, and use of open space.

- Telecommuting (reduces the need for long-distance travel and repeat or unnecessary shorter-distance trips)
- Walking
- Biking
- Mass transit (e.g., buses, streetcars, light rail, trains)
- Shared vehicles (carpooling and vanpooling for routine trips, especially daily commuting, when other modes are not efficient or economical)
- Automobiles (preferably shared versus privately owned and single-occupancy) and light trucks (to be used when hauling is important; for trips involving multiple destinations; for recreation and exploring or “motoring” as a limited sport)
- Air travel

Given these travel modes, the most effective way to achieve carbon neutrality (ceasing to contribute to an increase in carbon dioxide emissions) and relieve pressure on remaining open space is to reduce the need for privately-owned single-occupancy vehicles and air travel and increase human-powered travel, which is the most environmentally friendly. To become transit healthy, local policies should focus on increasing the use of telecommuting to replace the bulk of long-distance travel; promote walking and biking for shorter trips, which also provides human physical and mental health benefits; support the use of mass transit for commuting; and encourage auto use only when necessary for hauling, intermediate, and multiple-destination trips, for those times when “only a car will do” (the slogan of the Flexcar program).



Approximately 25 percent of the land area in sprawling Southern California is used exclusively to accommodate automobiles, including roadways, parking spaces, gas stations, and repair shops. Over time older areas have swapped their lively mix of uses for single-use zoning, abolishing live/work situations and enabling travel dominated by private vehicles. For example, in 1929, Colorado Boulevard, Pasadena’s main street and site of its annual Tournament of Roses Parade, was widened to accommodate exclusive automobile use. The street previously supported an array of travel modes: walking, bicycling, horse-drawn carriages, streetcars, and autos. The widening, which essentially wiped out the regal Victorian buildings on the north side of Colorado Boulevard in favor of higher travel speeds, may have been responsible in part for triggering a period of steady economic decline.

Today the suburban shopping mall is the city center’s most challenging competitor. To become more competitive and livable, cities need to become walkable once more. University of California-Berkeley urban design professor Michael Southworth defines walkability as

...the extent to which the built environment supports and encourages walking by providing for pedestrian comfort and safety, connecting people with varied destinations within a reasonable amount of time and effort, and offering visual interest in journeys throughout the network.



City streets need to be more than accessible pathways if they are to provide the stage for public interaction. It is not enough to rid barriers and conflicts to enable walking; there also needs to be a reason for it, an attractive destination. In *Suburban Nation*, to ensure the city’s success, the cofounders of the Congress for New Urbanism call for emulating the shopping mall’s “park once and walk” paradigm and creating places designed for pedestrians to wander, meander, linger, and discover new things and each other. The city’s edge, they argue, is its public realm, its fabric of public institutions and places woven with housing, offices, and shops that can lead to a 24-hour, active, intersecting street life. Furthermore Project for Public Places transportation vice president Andy Wiley-Schwartz reiterates that streets are public spaces and calls for them “to be designed for all users.” Thus to become sustainable, cities’ overarching goal should be to recover from their conversion to auto-oriented main streets and become truly multimodal again, i.e., slow auto traffic in favor of road sharing among many travel choices to support an increase in foot traffic.

To provide a sustainable transportation system, it is also vital to understand the important link between transportation and land-use planning through effective urban design. This can be summed up as follows:

- All places (destinations) are necessarily linked by paths (ways to get there). Hence there is a direct and necessary connection between land use and transportation, and therefore they should be planned simultaneously.
- The world’s great streets function as both paths and places, serving as public spaces and contributing to local vitality and community-building.
- To reduce time and energy spent on transportation, accommodate a growing population, and ultimately reduce greenhouse gas emissions, the number and length of vehicle trips need to be reduced. Hence, to increase efficiency, cities need to become more compact and support denser, transit-oriented development that brings jobs and services closer to where people live.

Recommendations

With respect to sustainability, Culver City faces challenges stemming from being “a city within a city,” surrounded by the Greater Los Angeles area. These challenges include being overwhelmed by growing population, poor public transportation and air quality, limited water resources, an affordable housing shortage, as well as traffic congestion, smog, two-hour commutes, and fear of density. The city has a disproportionate amount of pass-through traffic and encourages auto use above other modes, especially by providing excess parking and wide streets that function largely as vehicle traffic corridors for nonresidents. It also has more lower-density, single-family housing than any other form and little mixed-use zoning. The city’s concerns are typical of most urbanized areas challenged by a growing population: a finite amount of land and other natural resources and an increasing rate of growth and change. Additionally the preference for using single-occupancy private vehicles above all other modes of transit because of land use, comfort, flexibility, and perceived travel efficiency, is difficult to overcome. Some



cities have made a deliberate effort and succeeded in reducing their auto dependency by shifting support to mass transit and increasing their housing capacity in the central areas. San Francisco, Vancouver, and Portland, Ore., are vibrant examples. With a shift in perspective, political willpower, and strength to take a leadership role and move forward, Culver City's challenges can be overcome and serve to strengthen and support the city's many assets.

Culver City lies between downtown Los Angeles and the Pacific Ocean. By the end of the decade it will host an Exposition (Expo) Light Rail station linking these two destinations and improving nonautomobile access to the city, especially for its high population of daytime inhabitants. As an important entertainment industry hub, Culver City has a daytime population nearly five times greater than its residential one—200,000 people during the day versus 40,000 residents. Its major assets include



- A flat, walkable, safe terrain (good for walking and biking; good for walking to schools)
- Mild, sunny weather (good for outdoor uses, including walking and biking)
- Ballona Creek (a natural resource and a potential trailway to the Pacific Ocean)
- An older, smaller grid of streets and mature landscaping (both attractive to walkers)
- Wireless Internet
- Good local bus service that is also “wired” for Internet use
- Attractive destination nodes: downtown Culver City, with an upscale streetscape; Town Plaza (an “outdoor living room”); and the growing Helms/Arts District
- A captive market of 200,000 daytime users within easy walking distance of city businesses
- A small-town feel with attractive residential neighborhoods, an inventory of historic buildings, and a sense of place
- A small, progressive city of 40,000 educated and empowered citizens within five square miles
- A small, accessible city government (willing and able to respond to the community and make changes)

Four categories of recommendations with an array of possible actions are provided here for Culver City to consider as it begins the process of updating its General Plan to include more sustainable transportation practices.

Reduce Automobile Dependency by Providing a Greater Range of Safe, Efficient, Economical, and Equitable Travel Choices

Walking

- Develop a pedestrian plan (streets and sidewalks inventory)
- Prioritize and implement pedestrian-oriented projects to increase pedestrian-only areas, open space, and wayfinding
- Create a “great main street” and pedestrian core in downtown Culver City by calming and deemphasizing Culver and Washington boulevards, reduce street widths, restrict the number of curb cuts, provide on-street parking buffers, increase widths of sidewalks and medians, and shift heavy through-traffic to Venice Boulevard
- Consider temporary street closures for festivals, events, and the weekly Farmers’ Market
- Develop Ballona Creek as a pedestrian and bicycle pathway, linked to neighborhoods

Biking

- Develop and adopt a bike plan
- Prioritize and implement biking-oriented projects, including public lockers, restrooms, showers, and bike racks
- Require new development to accommodate bike riders
- Investigate a bike-sharing program

Mass Transit

- Improve the image and experience of riding the bus
- Reduce headways and increase reliability and connectivity to other modes of travel and mass transit systems
- Investigate developing a dedicated busway along Culver Boulevard
- Investigate a dedicated trolley or streetcar within the city’s downtown to provide access to remote parking and the Arts District, enabling “park once and walk”

- Provide safe, well-lit, attractive bus shelters, with real-time transit information
- Study the Expo Light Rail alignment and access carefully to maximize ridership

Automobiles (Private and Shared) and Light Trucks

- Synchronize traffic lights to improve flow.
- Investigate car-sharing programs (e.g., Flexcar) and prioritize parking for shared vehicles.
- Provide the right amount of parking. If there is not enough, drivers circle looking for parking, which increases congestion; if there is too much, revenue-producing land and resources are being wasted.
- Share parking among existing uses and establish in-lieu parking fees for new development to fund shared lots.
- Require property owners to unbundle parking costs.



- Meter on-street parking and create parking districts. Use the meter money where it is collected—within parking districts—to fund such assets as lighting, landscaping, maintenance, security, and special events.
- Revisit minimum and maximum parking requirements to discourage excess auto use.
- Consider imposing a parking cap.



- Conduct an origins and destination study, if data are unavailable, to determine the magnitude of pass-through traffic.
- Consider congestion pricing to discourage pass-through traffic.

Shorten Trip Lengths by Creating a Compact Community with a Range of Densities

- Promote mixed uses and living above stores, especially in the downtown core where the addition of one or two more stories will help to deemphasize the width of Culver Boulevard.
- Develop mixed uses adjacent to Fox Hills Mall and Sepulveda Boulevard.

- Redevelop the West End, converting the sea of parking at Costco to higher and more sustainable uses.
- Consider converting the zoning ordinance to form-based codes.
- Close the jobs/housing gap (40,000 residents, 200,000 workers) by adopting incentives for businesses to provide on-site employee housing. Work with the studios and other large landowners to develop on-site housing.
- Allow housing in industrial areas: living above the shop and work/live options, especially in the Hayden Industrial Tract.
- Develop design guidelines that promote walkability and pedestrian linkages.
- Develop mixed-use, higher-density, transit-oriented development within easy walking distance of the new Expo Light Rail station.

Practice What You Preach—Make the City a Model for Sustainable Transportation Practices

- Become a model business and employer by making a commitment to become carbon neutral.
- Develop online permitting and improve access to online information.
- Emphasize teleconferencing and telecommuting; deemphasize air travel.
- Develop and implement a transportation demand management program, including providing universal transit passes and a cash-out parking program for city employees.
- Share city-owned parking with other uses.
- Provide showers and lockers for bike riders.
- Guarantee a ride home for mass transit users.
- Develop car-share and bike-share programs.
- Build housing for city employees, especially for lower-paid workers who tend to commute the longest distances. These workers spend more time in transit, have a greater impact on greenhouse gas emissions, and will generally benefit most from living closer to their workplace.

Create a Regional Transportation System by Joining Forces with Your Neighbors

- Participate actively to develop a regional transit authority and work closely in the interim with the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) and other local transit providers to increase ridership
- Participate in and comment on Los Angeles's update of its Mobility Element
- Share information and best practices with other cities, especially those in Los Angeles County, and encourage them to commit to carbon neutrality

Conclusions

During the process of updating Culver City's General Plan, it will be critical for the city to spend time on community visioning and education, making a special effort to ensure the greatest amount of public participation. The city should work closely and proactively with the Chamber of Commerce, the Downtown Business Association, neighborhood associations, and other local stakeholders to raise awareness of smart growth and sustainable practices. In particular the city needs to educate property owners and businesses on ways to reduce automobile use while increasing foot traffic. It also needs to dispel the community's fear of density by providing effective and attractive examples of higher-density and mixed-use projects. New policies should include incentives for smart development and transit choices, rather than relying on city subsidies. To achieve sustainable transportation, the city should think holistically in terms of quality of life and linking transportation and land use, instead of achieving free-flowing auto traffic. The problems of air pollution and traffic congestion are regional ones that cannot be solved alone or without an eye toward improving urban design. Through forward-thinking, innovative, and bold policies and actions, achieved through effective leadership committed to community outreach and participation, the city can serve as a regional model.

SUSTAINABLE LAND USE

Macro zoning serves to segregate and appropriate uses to define and control land use. We can see in every city the divisions between railyards, warehouse, mixed use, offices, dense residential, and single-family residential. Sometimes these divisions are only legal (existing only on maps) and others are physical—“the other side of the tracks.” These methods of making and forming cities have been a critical foundation of the massive growth that has occurred in cities across this country over the past century. Macro zone thinking has served us well. Are we tied to the historical definitions contained in that system, however?



Warehouses often turn into sales and retail areas; or in other cases, they are highly desirable places to live. For some reason the beauty of an old brick warehouse causes investors to spend money for rehabilitation which inspires buyers to choose a new way of living—the loft. This is a micro example of progressive zoning shift.

In Culver City it seems that a lack of critical macro zoning action is causing a segregation of land uses that limits growth, change, and single use. Thus the following recommendations are offered:

- Look at various ways to question zoning and land use. What was the intent of the original zoning action?
- Redefine zoning labels. Is “industrial” the same as it was 80 years ago?
- Determine whether new developments (e.g., office blocks) are being forced to provide housing at a reasonable level compared with the amount of office space being provided.
- Determine what density and variety of use are allowed in the zoning districts.



Zoning Questions for Culver City

- Can housing be located in the Hayden Industrial Tract? It is industrial now but what is the nature of the industry? Would workers embrace the ability to walk to work? What would this do to production? How would this reduce traffic and pollution?



- Sony is poised to rehabilitate and add new buildings to its campus; what is the city requiring in the way of worker housing? The buildings are specified to be LEED certified. What does this mean for the city—are they going to produce their own power? Can they produce a surplus to give back to the city? How much of the existing building material will be reused? Can the city use it for park structures, city buildings, or new housing construction? Is the city giving incentives for more density in this specific land use?



- The downtown square bounded by the Culver Hotel is the city's heart; how does the zoning code enable denser use in this area?
- What would happen if the zoning code was rewritten to require more density and multiple uses?



- How would downtown change if the zoning code required 1,000 affordable living units in the core?
- Is the city's building height achieving the original goals?
- It seems that the objective of limiting building height is to not replicate mistakes made in the 1980s. If the building height restriction were to be increased, would the city allow new buildings that would eclipse past, less-desired development? In other words, instead of limiting height (density), allow greater height and thus enable a more sustainable use of existing land.
- Are there areas of the city suited to zoning adjustments to accommodate multiple dwellings or townhouses? If so, are lending institutions available to create local loan opportunities?

The Heart and Nodes

The Heart

We have all been to places that make us feel complete. Places that feel like “home” even though we are visitors on vacation. These places have a heart. Global examples would be Venice, Paris, New York City, Montreal, Moscow, and London. This might also include small villages in Europe or South America—size does not always factor into it. Whether it is home to 1,000 or 1 million people, successful places have a heart and an agreed-upon central core. These places are meaningful and, most important, sustainable. In this evaluation the judgment is not directly connected to energy used, pollution, or other factors. Rather the location is sustainable because it provides a sense of place that is lasting, dense, and regenerative. Culver City has all of the characteristics of having a strong heart and sense of place—it is almost there. The following are specific recommendations for the city’s heart:

- Provide places for people to live so they can walk to work and purchase coffee from local owners
- Aspire to have mixed use and multiple use in all new development—the downtown area is perfect for mixed use because it will affect the smallest number of single-family property owners
- Look to the upper stories of existing buildings for new living units and office space
- Look up for opportunities for roof gardens, extended living spaces, and green roof projects
- Define and invest in existing green space in downtown—increase and link the park system with walk/bike trails—to connect all living options with the heart

Nodes

In group discussions with city constituents, everyone agreed that the city had areas that currently function as strong nodes. The group collectively agreed that the city had, through public investment, increased the awareness and quality of the various nodes. These nodes can become catalysts for even more diversity and strength. Recommendations for sustainable city nodes are

- Define type and use at each node (e.g., arts district, shopping, living, business, entertainment)
- Define proximity to heart (Is it walkable/bikeable?)

- Create anchors (Does each node have an anchor tenant/business? What do the public and private sectors need for an anchor to move there?)
- Provide incentives to developers in each area
- Provide a fast-tracked permit and development process for new and future projects
- Give projects that meet LEED requirements specific, measurable benefits within the city tax structure
- Define uses of buildings at multimodal nodes (If a train stop is installed, can you get lunch, purchase flowers on the way home, or pick up your dry cleaning?)
- Provide and build a heart within each node

Recommendations for Ballona Creek

Design and Opportunity

Probably the single largest part of Culver City that could be addressed from a sustainability perspective is Ballona Creek. The creek (concrete strip) is a gateway and conduit for a huge amount of trash that pollutes its path and ultimately the ocean. The city has begun to address this using filters. These areas, although limited, do a good job of catching floating objects that would otherwise find their way to the ocean. The problem is that there are only a handful of the filters and they are costly to service. Perhaps a new direction and way of thinking could benefit the creek. If the creek is considered an asset rather than a liability, public buy-in may increase.

- Look at the creek as an opportunity and not as a problem
- Provide multiple opportunities, through the design, for multimodal travel and entertainment
- Find ways to allow the creek to increase, rather than decrease, adjacent property values
- Locate private investment to make the creek a destination rather than a hidden conduit for water and trash

- Research ways to capture the runoff water for future use for graywater supply and distribution
- Look at the condition of the creek's edge for ways to engage the street, sidewalk, and park areas
- Plan for the creek to serve as a filter for the surrounding area and provide clean water to the ocean (this will put Culver City on the map as a leader in environmental stewardship)

Final Recommendation

The one goal for land use in Culver City would be to have all of the various stakeholders form a position from which every land use decision is made and developed. This single, collective position, provided it has sustainable thinking as its basis, will surely propel the city in a direction that is meaningful and lasting. This collective vision could be called the sustainable filter and would provide a clear direction for the city and the public.

MOVING FORWARD

This report outlines an extensive roadmap for the future of Culver City, designed to help Culver City move toward a better understanding of what sustainability means and how to orient the city's planning processes and documents around the concept of sustainability. This roadmap suggests directions that will provide for the community's long-term sustainability rather than offer quick-fix solutions for tomorrow.



Creating and implementing a long-term vision for a community is difficult and requires the sustained commitment from local government, business and civic leadership, and the community as a whole. Although the SDAT process has affirmed the city's commitment to proceed sustainably in regards to its future development and planning, it is essential that the city structure conditions to ensure that it has a decent chance of succeeding in the long run. Ingredients for success must focus on a sustainability vision connected in a meaningful way to specific policy and program changes; on action steps monitored and evaluated over time, preferably by city staff; and on political buy-in from key interest groups, politicians, and the general public. These must all be institutionalized so that implementing staff and community advocates will exist long

term to ensure that changes come about. All these conditions will come about slowly, through consistent effort by city planners, politicians, and local residents.

Under this comprehensive sustainability framework, planning processes should aim to bring about meaningful changes in a range of areas. This requires systematically thinking through a long-term approach to local planning while reconciling objectives of economy, environment, and social equity. With this approach in mind, Culver City must undertake the following steps:

- Define core values. What are the things most valued by Culver City residents? Why do they live here and stay here, and without what would Culver City would lose its identity?
- Determine specific policies. What are the specific goals and common directions that will preserve these values and identity?

- Adopt an action agenda. What tools, strategies, or activities directly implement the policies and move toward the defined goals?
- Benchmark measures of success. How will Culver City assess the affect of actions and determine course corrections? Are actions actually maintaining the core values?

Visioning

In every community one of the key ingredients in moving forward toward a sustainable future is the people. The contributions the people of Culver City will have to make toward crafting and implementing their vision is of utmost importance. For three days, the SDAT interviewed and observed the city's citizens and believes that this community is more than equipped with the capacity and skill set to act on this report's recommendations. However, there is one area for which the SDAT is concerned about Culver City's future: uneven participation (in some cases nonparticipation) by a broader representation of the community and of key city leadership. The lost opportunity for input by the entire community could have significant consequences, particularly in addressing basic city needs, as well as in identifying what makes Culver City unique for sustainability. Any process will suffer a serious credibility gap if a representative base of the population is not represented but also, most important, if the elected leadership is perceived as not taking on the responsibility to move in the right direction.

Going beyond the city's general goal areas, the development of a long-term, wide-ranging, and creative vision for the future is important for Culver City decision-makers and the general public. Such visioning has taken place, to some degree, with the SDAT but must be made much stronger and more visual, into a more specific vision to inspire people with new ideas, establish clear links between visionary goals and practical implementation, and be presented in a way that will be accessible to a broad audience and include widespread distribution through the media. The timing of visioning also is important and must be maximally useful within particular processes in order to engage and educate the public. Of exemplary note are the following two initiatives organized to take place in advance of the SDAT visit: Culver City's Green Summit Series, an educational series for the public about environmental issues in Culver City and the launch of a logo, which was created by the Academy of Visual and Performing Arts at Culver City High School, for the Culver City Sustainable Community Plan. Future efforts will need to focus on sustaining public interest with the use of similar or other consensus-building means.

The four most urgent actions to be taken in anticipation of the city's next visioning process are



- Establishing a forum for encouraging and including all citizens to be aware and participate, whether through a formal neighborhood association or citizens' advisory committee that delivers on community involvement and provides a means of getting reliable information to the community for civic, private, and governmental initiatives.
- Updating development regulations to reflect the real opportunities and to enhance Culver City's aesthetic,

environmental, and cultural authenticity. A thorough review of the city's zoning decisions and appeals process should be undertaken to minimize overrides by boards and agencies once clear guidelines have been adopted.

- Engaging the community in a new approach toward defining problems and creative solutions, rather than allowing false dichotomies to restrain the vital creativity needed to meet the challenges and opportunities awaiting this city.
- Leading with examples. One way to make visions real for people and to engage the public and sustain interest is to publicize existing best practices within particular areas of sustainability planning. The number and variety of resources have increased tremendously over the years with concerted efforts seen nationally and internationally by the development of databases, Web sites, guidebooks, and exhibits on the subject. These contain examples of best practices of sustainable development and provide a wealth of information.

Once these actions have been established, the city can proceed with developing indicators to track progress toward an agreed-upon vision and set of sustainable goals and initiatives. Indicators are a great tool, with the power to demonstrate problems, motivate action, educate the public, and show the positive effect of sustainability policies. They can easily be mere symbolic exercises, however, unless they have political commitment and buy-in by the relevant institutions and leaders. Also it is important to understand that planning is a work in progress, and the goals and indicators will need to be maintained over time and updated regularly.

Although Culver City faces many challenges in the coming months and years as it moves forward with preparing its sustainable community plan and the General Plan Update, building consensus for this plan will be the most critical task. It is the hope of the SDAT and the AIA Center for Communities by Design that our visit has facilitated an initial dialogue among all constituents looking for a common ground on which to build an integrated and holistic vision for the future. The AIA SDAT looks forward to the sustainable community plan and the General Plan Update, their implementation, and the inspiration they will create throughout the city and the entire region of Los Angeles and Southern California.

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